

# The Use of the Verbal Suffix *-nu-* in Hittite as an Overt Marker of Transitivity

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## 1. Issue of the suffix *-nu-* in Hittite

Hittite has a verbal derivational suffix *-nu-* attached to adjectives and verbs. Its function has been interpreted as the causative. When *-nu-* is suffixed to adjectives or verbs, it forms transitive (=divalent) verbs from adjectives and intransitives (=monovalent), functioning as causatives, as shown in example (1).

- (1) a. harki- ‘white’ / harganu- ‘to make white’  
b. hat- ‘to be dry’ / hatnu- ‘to make dry’  
c. mema- ‘to speak’ / memiyanu- ‘to cause to speak’  
(2) parh- ‘to chase, drive out’ / parhanu- ‘to make (horses) gallop’

When *-nu-* is suffixed to transitive verbs, the number of arguments usually does not increase. Hoffner & Melchert (GHL, 2008: 247) argued that “Double accusatives ... are particularly common with verbs which are causatives of transitive verbs”, however, Luraghi (2010: 148) pointed out that the statement is based on only one example (4), and there is no other example of a ditransitive causative in the whole Hittite corpus.

- (3) zai- ‘to cross, to cross over’ / zinu- ‘to make to cross’  
(4) takku LÚ-as GUD-ŠU ÍD-an **zīnuskizzi**  
“If a man is crossing the river with his ox,”<sup>1</sup> (OH, Law, KBo 6.2 ii 30)

Since the *-nu-* suffix does not change the valency of the base transitive verbs, it appears as if there were no distinction between the meaning of the base and that of the derivative, and it is difficult to extract its function. Kronasser (1966) observed that *-nu-* derivatives of transitive verbs often have the same meaning as their bases, and called them ‘Übercharakterisierung (hyper-characterization)’. In contrast, Luraghi (1993) claimed that the *-nu-* derivatives show meanings similar to their bases, but the suffix limits the bases to more specific meaning, e.g. technical terms, as shown in example (2). In addition, there are some *-nu-*

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<sup>1</sup> Hoffner (1997: 52)

derivatives in Hittite of which the *-nu-* suffix has traditionally been interpreted as a ‘causative marker omitting the causee’ (ex. *tekkussai-* ‘to show (oneself)’, *tekkussanu-* ‘to (**make**) show’ etc.). The function of the suffix *-nu* attached to transitive verbs is yet to be clarified.

## 2. The purpose of this research

In this paper, (a) I reviewed the function of the suffix *-nu* focusing on the cases where it is attached to transitive verbs, and examined the existence of passages in which the suffix does not change the base meaning. In view of the historical change, which has not been considered heretofore, (b) I showed that when this suffix is attached without changing the base meaning, the bases are used as both transitive and intransitive (‘labile’), and the suffix *-nu* started to be added to them after MH in order to mark transitivity overtly.

## 4. Method

I looked up all derivatives with *-nu* and their bases in a dictionary, and examined their meanings, examples and the periods of their first attestation. I first listed all the derivatives in *-nu-* based on Luraghi (1993), adding new forms from Tischler (2008), classified the bases according to their parts of speech. Second, I examined their meanings and the periods of their first attestation, using dictionaries. Then I collected all passages of those verbs and investigated them philologically, in order to understand the exact meanings of those verbs, by using the Munich card data for compiling *Hethitisches Wörterbuch* and the Mainz card data.

## 5. Result

As a result, there are 114 derivatives with *-nu* in total. I classified them according to the part of speech of the bases, and found 24 adjectives, 59 intransitives, and 17 verbs used as transitives (including ‘labiles’. Lability has not been considered by previous studies). The number of the verbs whose base or meaning is unknown is 14. All the verbs used as transitive are given in Table 1. All 17 bases are attested in OH. Among the derivatives with *-nu*, no.10 *pahsanu-*<sup>2</sup> and no.17 *zainu-* are attested in OH, and the others appear after MH. This fact

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<sup>2</sup> It is often said that there is no difference in translation between *pahs-* and *pahsanu-* (to protect). In this paper, however, I observed that *pahs-* does not have the *-ant-* participle form, and the periphrastic passive construction cannot be made with *pahs-*, while *pahsanu-* has many examples of periphrastic passive. Moreover *pahs-* has the meaning “to keep (something) safe” rather than “to protect”. Therefore, *pahs-* is possibly a stative verb like *har(k)-*, and *-nu-* might give the dynamic feature.

indicates that the *-nu-* suffix achieved productivity gradually.

### 5.1 *-nu-* derivatives of which the *-nu-* suffix has already been interpreted as an overt marker of transitivity in dictionaries

#### 5.1.1 *ases-*(OH~) / *asesanu-*(NH~)(Table1-1)

*ases-* ‘to cause to sit down’ is a causative verb derived from *es-* ‘to sit down’ by reduplication. HW<sup>2</sup> (A: 385) claimed that in Mursilil’s period (the beginning of NH), *es-* and *ases-* started to be confused, and *ases-* came to be used as an intransitive as well. Since *ases-* became labile, the suffix *-nu* started to be added to it in order to mark transitivity overtly.

- (5) partaunit=us LUGAL-un MUNUS.LUGAL-ann=a **asaskizzi**  
“He(she) made the king and queen sit down with the wings many times.”  
(OH, ritual, KBo 17.1 i 6)
- (6) LUGAL-i peran **asesanzi**  
“They sit down in front of the king.” (NH, KI.LAM, KBo10.26 i 42)
- (7) ]x ALAM LUGAL ŠA GIŠ **asisanuanzi**  
“They set the wooden statue of the king.” (NH, ritual, KUB 43.49 rev.10)

#### 5.1.2 *laknu-*(MH~) / *lak-*(OH~)(Table1-9)

CHD (L-N: 20) states that *laknu-* is not attested in OH yet. While MH/NH *laknu-* replaced OH active *lak-* in meaning, MP *lak-* continues from OH through NH. In OH, *lak-* are used as both transitive (in the active) and intransitive (in the MP), but ceased to inflect in the active. It was regarded as intransitive, and then the *-nu* derivatives took over the function of the transitive.

- (8) takku LÚ.U<sub>19</sub>.LU-an *ELLAM* kuiski ... ZU<sub>9</sub>- ŠU **lāki**  
“If someone ... knocks out a free man’s tooth” (OH, Law, KBo 6.2 i 9)
- (9) mān=kan antuhsas **lagāri** nasma=as=kan <sup>GIŠ</sup>GIGIR-az katta māuszi  
“If a person falls down or if he falls from a chariot”  
(NH, catalogue entry, KUB 8.36 iii 9-10)
- (10) UR.GI<sub>7</sub>=wa=kan ŠÀ É.DINGIR-LIM pait nu=kan <sup>GIŠ</sup>BANŠUR **laknut**  
“A dog entered the temple and overturned a table”  
(NH, oracle question, KUB 5.7 obv.24-25)

## 5.2 *-nu-* derivatives of which the *-nu-* suffix has traditionally been interpreted as a ‘causative marker omitting the causee’

Among 17 derivatives with *-nu-*, there are only 4 verbs of which the *-nu-* suffix has traditionally been interpreted as a ‘causative marker omitting the causee’. Their cells in Table 1-3, 6, 7, 16 are dark-shaded.

### 5.2.1 *hassanu-* (NH~) / *has(s)-* (OH~)(Table 1-3)

The next sentence (11) has been considered as an example of a ‘causative marker omitting the causee’.

- (11) **hassanuer**=an MUNUS.M[EŠ ... ]  
“die Fraue[n] ließen ihn gebären”<sup>3</sup> (NH, Ullikummi, KUB 33.93+ iii10)

(11) is a sentence in the Ullikummi myth. *hassanuer* is the third person plural form and its subject is not the mother but “the women (midwives)”. Therefore the function of *-nu-* is obviously causative. Kronasser (1966: 455) and Luraghi (1993: 167) interpreted =an as the child (Ullikummi) and claimed that the causee “the mother” is omitted. However, Hoffner (1998: 57) translated this sentence as “[The ...] women made her give birth” and interpreted =an as the mother.

Previous studies on *-nu-* treated the verb *has(s)-* as a transitive verb. However, *-nu-* can be used as an intransitive verb as well. Intransitive *has(s)-* means “give birth” and its many examples are gathered in HW<sup>2</sup> (H: 392-393). It is mainly used in birth rituals and passages about domestic animals where the action of birth itself is focused (e.g. whether or not a cow has experienced childbirth).

- (12) DAM <sup>LÚŠU</sup>.ĤA<sub>6</sub>=wa=za DUMU.NITA-an **hasta**  
“Die Frau des Fischers hat einen Sohn geboren.”<sup>4</sup> (NH, fairy tale, KUB 24.7 iv 47)
- (13) mahhan=ma=z MUNUS-za **ha-<sup>1</sup>a<sup>1</sup>[-si]** DUMU-as **mauszi**  
“But when the woman gives bir[th] (and) the child is fallen (i.e. being born)”<sup>5</sup>  
(MH, birth ritual, KBo 17.62+63 i 21’-22’)

<sup>3</sup> WH<sup>2</sup> (H: 394)

<sup>4</sup> E. Rieken et al. (ed.), hethiter.net/: CTH 363.1 (INTR 2009-08-12)

<sup>5</sup> Beckman (1983:33)

Therefore, Hoffner’s explanation is better, and *-nu-* of *hassanu-* functions as a normal causative like the example (1) c. *mema-* / *memiyanu-*, in which case *-nu-* is suffixed to an intransitive verb, rather than a “causative omitting the causee”.

### 5.2.2 *karpanu-* (MH~) / *karp-* (OH~)(Table 1-7)

*karp-* means “to raise, lift” when it is a transitive verb, and is often used in the medio-passive, meaning “to rise”.

(14) n=aš :maltaneš GIM-an šarā **karpišket[t]ari**  
 “(Den Diorit, der im Wasser gewachsen ist, kennst du ihn nicht?) Er **erhe[b]t (sich)**  
 wie ein *maltani*.”<sup>6</sup> (NH, myth, KUB 33.106 iii 36-37)

(15) mān zennizzi nu=kan<sup>LÚ</sup>ḪAL aniyantan ANA<sup>URUDU</sup>KAxPA anda dāi  
 serr=a=ssan DINGIR<sup>MEŠ</sup> dāi n=at **karpanuzi** n=at LİL-ri pidāi  
 “Sobald er fertig ist, legt der Ritualist die Ritualausrüstung in den Behälter, er setzt  
 die Götter drauf, er **nimmt es auf** und er bringt es in die Steppe.”<sup>7</sup>  
 (MH?, ritual, KUB 7.41 iv 42-44)

Luraghi (1993: 167) argued that the ritualist, who has power, orders someone to lift the container, and interpreted this example as a ‘causative omitting the causee’. However, KUB 7.41 is almost perfectly reconstructed, and this ritual is performed only by a ritualist (<sup>LÚ</sup>ḪAL) from the beginning till the end. Therefore, Luraghi’s interpretation is obviously wrong, and Miller (2008: 217) rightly translates *karpanu-* as a transitive verb.

### 5.2.3 *tekkussanu-* (MH~)/*tekkussai-* (OH~)(Table 1-16)

Friedrich (1930: 138) argued that *tekkussanu-* in (16) should be translated as “vorstellen lassen” with “lassen (let)”, because it has the “causative” suffix, and the subject “I” (Suppiluliuma) must be ordering someone (e.g. an officer) to introduce “you” (Hukkana). However, Friedrich interpreted *tekkussanu-* (18) in the same treaty text as “anzeigen” without

<sup>6</sup> E. Rieken et al. (ed.), hethiter.net/: CTH 345.I.3.1 (TX 2009-08-31, TRde 2009-08-30)

<sup>7</sup> Miller (2008: 217)

“lassen”, because the translation with “lassen” is unnatural. Many scholars follow Friedrich’s interpretation, and it is decided ad hoc whether to translate -nu- by “lassen”. Moreover, there is only one example, (16), where *tekkussanu-* is translated as a causative verb, and about 50 remaining examples are never translated with “lassen”.

- (16) nu=ttā=kkan <sup>URU</sup>Ḫattuši ANA LÚ<sup>MEŠ</sup> <sup>URU</sup>Ḫayaša=ya aššuli ištarna **tekkuššanunun**  
 “In Ḫattuša und inmitten der Leute von Ḫayaša habe ich dich in guter Gesinnung **vorstellen lassen.**”<sup>8</sup> (NH, treaty, KBo5.3 i 4-5)
- (17) n=an=kan ištarna **tekkuššami**  
 “(Diesen soll jeder anerkennen!) und drinnen **vorstelle**, ...”  
 (NH, treaty, KBo5.3 i 10)
- (18) apūnn=a=mu antuḫšan *UL* **tekkuššanuši**  
 “(oder wenn du Böses hörst, das Meine Majestät betrifft, und wenn du es mir verbirgst und es mir nicht sagst) und mir jenen Menschen nicht **anzeigst** und ihn gar verbirgst;”  
 (NH, treaty, KBo5.3 i 29)

There are examples where *tekkusai-* is obviously used as an intransitive verb, even though previous studies treated the verb as transitive.

- (19) nu=ssi EGIR-an nawi kuitki **tekkussiyaizzi**  
 “(Whether he has gone over (to) the land of Mt. S(h)akaddunuwa, or perhaps has turned back and come into the territory,) no trace of him **has shown up** yet.”<sup>9</sup>  
 (MH, letter, HKM 46 Vs.12-14)
- (20) <sup>LÚ</sup>KÚR-as **tekussizzi**  
 “(BE. 2 Seiten (sind da), und sie sind wie eine Schlange verschlungen;) ein Feind **zeigt sich**, ...”<sup>10</sup> (OH, Lebermodelle, KBo 25.1 2)

Therefore, in this case, -nu- is attached to the verb *tekkussai-*, which is used both transitively and intransitively, in order to mark transitivity.

<sup>8</sup> G. Wilhelm (ed.), hethiter.net/: CTH 42 (INTR 2013-02-24)

<sup>9</sup> Hoffner (2009:174)

<sup>10</sup> De Vos (2013: 178-180)

### 5.3 *zinu-* (OH~) / *zai-* (OH~)(Table 1-17)

(21) is the only example of a double accusative causative.

- (21) takku LÚ-as GUD-ŠU ÍD-an **zīnuskizzi**  
“If a man is crossing the river with his ox, ...”<sup>11</sup> (OH, Law, KBo 6.2 ii 30)
- (22) taknas=at <sup>d</sup>UTU-as KASKAL-an **paiddu**  
“Sie sollen den Weg der Sonnengöttin der Erde **gehen**.”<sup>12</sup>  
(MH, myth, KUB 17.10 iv13)

*zai-* usually occurs with an accusative argument. However, there are examples where there is no accusative argument found in the context. I believe that the accusative arguments in the examples of *zai-* are the accusative of the way (GHL: 249) and are hence adverbial, and *zai-* is an intransitive verb like *pai-* “go”, even though it has been treated as a transitive verb. This view is supported by the fact that the accusative arguments in the examples of *zai-* are either ÍD, ZAG, or pahhur, which is crossed over.

- (23) nu=kan *INA*<sup>URU</sup> Aura pariya l zāitti  
“you shall not cross over beyond the city of Aura”<sup>13</sup> (NH, treaty, KBo 5.13 i 31)
- (24) kāsa=kan LÚ.KÚR pangarit 2 *AŠRA zāi[s]* nu=kan 1-is lattis *INA*<sup>URU</sup> Išteruwa **zāis**  
1-is =ma=kan lattis *INA*<sup>URU</sup> Zišpa **zāis**  
“The enemy (probably Kaška troops) has crossed (the frontier) in large numbers in two places. One tribal troop crossed at the city Išteruwa; another tribal troop crossed at the city Zišpa.”<sup>14</sup> (MH, letter, HKM 46 Vs.3-7)

In the same way, Zeilfelder (2001: 30), which is a study on ‘Der Akkusativ der Richtung (the accusative of the direction)’, argued that there is a construction with double accusative ‘jemanden wohin schicken’, and interpreted “HUR.SAG-an” in example (25) as an adverbial accusative.

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<sup>11</sup> Hoffner (1997: 52)

<sup>12</sup> E. Rieken et al. (ed.), hethiter.net/: CTH 324.1 (INTR 2012-05-10)

<sup>13</sup> Beckman (1999: 76)

<sup>14</sup> Hoffner (2009: 174)

- (25) nu=smas=kan HUR.SAG-an parhanzi  
 “and they will drive you into the mountains”<sup>15</sup> (NH, instruction, KUB 13.3 ii 11)

#### 5.4 parhanu- (MH~) / parh- (OH~)(Table 1-11)

Luraghi (1993) claimed that the *-nu-* suffix of *parhanu-* limits the base *parh-*, which means “to chase”, to more specific meaning, “to make gallop”. However, *parh-* itself has the meaning “to make gallop”.

- (26) namma=as 1-edani MŪŠI 3 DANNA pennai **parhanuzi**=ma=as ANA 8 IKU  
 INA 4 MŪŠI=ya 3 DANNA pennai **parhzi**=ya 8 IKU  
 “Ferner läßt er sie in 1-ner Nacht 3 DANNA traben, **galloppieren** aber läßt er sie  
 (über) 8 IKU. Auch in der 4. Nacht läßt er 3 DANNA traben und 8 Feld  
**galloppieren.**”<sup>16</sup>

(MH, horse training, KBo3.5 i 55-57)

CHD (P: 147) argued that “Although *parhanu-* is formally a *nu-*causative of *parh-*, it does not function that way. As there is no difference in translation between *pahs-* and *pahsanu-*, *tekkusai-* and *tekkusanu-*, neither is there a difference between *parh-* and *parhanu-*.” In this passage, both *parh-* and *parhanu-* are used, and no difference in the meaning is observed.

## 6. Analysis and Conclusion

In this paper, I reexamined the derivatives in *-nu-* from transitive bases, focusing on the diachronic changes not considered heretofore. I showed that in some cases the derivatives have identical meanings as their bases. Curiously, most of such bases in such cases function both transitively and intransitively, i.e. as labile verbs. There are 4 *-nu-* derivatives in Hittite of which the *-nu-* suffix has traditionally been interpreted as a ‘causative marker omitting mention of the causee’. However, there are passages where there is no obvious causee in the context, and there is no evidence supporting that *-nu-* in such passages actually has a causative function. Furthermore, when the *-nu-* suffix is attached without changing the base meaning, all the bases are attested in Old Hittite, while all the derivatives appear only in Middle Hittite or later.

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<sup>15</sup> Miller (2013: 81)

<sup>16</sup> Kammenhuber (1961: 93)

Therefore, I conclude that the suffix *-nu-* started being added in Middle Hittite to verbs which were used both transitively and intransitively, in order to mark transitivity overtly, and that suffixation of *-nu-* became increasingly productive in New Hittite.

### Abbreviations

KBo = Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi, KUB = Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi, MP = middle passive

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**Table 1. verbs used as transitive**

	Base		meaning (T: transitive, I: intransitive)	derivative with -nu		meaning	change of meaning
1	ases-	OH	to cause to sit down(T), to sit down(I)	asesanu-	NH	to cause to sit down(T)	no
2	harra-	OH	to mash(T), (MP?)to go bad(I)	harranu-	NH	to mash(T)	no
3	has-	OH	to give birth to(T), to give birth(I)	hassanu-	NH	to cause to give birth(T)	causative
4	ispar-	OH	to scatter(T)	isparnu-	OH?/ MH? <sup>17</sup>	to scatter(T)	no
5	istapp-	OH	to close(T)	istappinu-	NH	to close(T)	no
6	kank-	OH	to weigh(T)	kankanu-	NH	to weigh(T)	no
7	karp-	OH	to lift(T), to rise(I)	karpanu-	MH	to lift(T)	no
8	kars-	OH	to stop(T), to stop(I)	karsanu-	NH	to stop(T)	no
9	lak-	OH	to break(T), (MP)to fall(I)	laknu-	MH	(T)	no
10	pahs-	OH	to be protecting(T)	pahsanu-	OH	to protect(T)	(+dynamic?)
11	parh-	OH	to chase, to make gallop(T), to hurry(I)	parhanu-	MH	to make gallop(T)	no
12	parkiya-	OH	to grow(T), to grow(I)	parkiyanu-	MH	to raise(T)	no
13	pars-	OH	to break(T), to break(I)	parsanu-	NH	to break(T)	no
14	samesiya-	OH	to burn(T), (MP)to burn(I)	samesanu-	NH	to burn(T)	no
15	tarupp-	OH	to collet(T), (MP)to collect(I)	taruppiyanu-	NH	to collect(T)	no
16	tekkussai-	OH	to show(T), to appear(I)	tekkussanu-	MH	to show(T)	no
17	zai-	OH	to cross, to cross over(T,I)	zainu-	OH	to make to cross(T)	causative

<sup>17</sup> KBo 20.10 is the oldest example.

